

# Clash of the Divorce Lawyer Titans: The Attorneys Behind Halle Berry and Olivier Martinez's Split

0  
SHARES

Halle Berry and Olivier Martinez

Getty

By Christine Pelisek

[@chrispelisek](#)

11/01/2015 AT 08:45 AM EST

Both sides in the [Halle Berry–Olivier Martinez](#) split say they want to proceed amicably. But no matter what happens, they both have high-powered Hollywood divorce attorneys in their corners.

Berry and Martinez [announced their divorce](#) earlier this week after two years of marriage. The glittery couple first [met](#) on the set of the film *Dark Tide* in 2010 and wed in 2013. But their reign as one of Hollywood's hottest duos ended this week when they each filed separate divorce petitions.

Representing Berry is Stephen Kolodny, who has counted Mel Gibson and Lisa Bonder Kerkorian among his clients. Going to bat for Martinez is Laura Wasser, who's handled legal action for Britney Spears, Ryan Reynolds, Tom Cruise and more. If you're a celebrity looking to disentangle yourself from a spouse romantically (and financially), these are the folks you call.

Martinez's lawyer, Wasser, is a partner (alongside her father, Dennis Wasser) at a prominent Los Angeles family law practice, and she has long been a household name in Hollywood.

Keep up with Halle Berry in the pages of PEOPLE Magazine [by subscribing now](#).

"Everyone knows Laura," says L.A. family law attorney Atousa Saei. "She is the celebrity of celebrity divorce attorneys. She has a very cool and calm demeanor."

Wasser is considered an expert at settling cases and protecting her clients from the media onslaught. She is the author of *It Doesn't Have to Be That Way: How to Divorce Without Destroying Your Family or*

## *Bankrupting Yourself.*

"She is very good about keeping the client's confidences and very good at resolving complicated divorce issues out of the media," says another L.A. family law expert, Steve Mindel. "The classic example would be Tom Cruise. There is not a lot of discussion about her clients unless the clients specifically ask for it."

Wasser is facing off against veteran divorce attorney Kolodny, who'll be working hard to protect Berry's [estimated net worth](#) of around \$70 million in 2012, according to *Forbes*.

Kolodny, who has practiced law since the '60s, is a Boston University School of Law graduate who represented [Mel Gibson](#) in his child custody battle with his ex-girlfriend Oksana Grigorieva, and Lisa Bonder Kerkorian, the former wife of billionaire Kirk Kerkorian, among other high-profile clients.

"Stephen is the best in the field," says well-known criminal defense attorney Mark Geragos. "He is a wonderful tactician, courtroom lawyer and the preeminent lawyer in the field. Stephen takes control of the courtroom. Laura is a formidable opponent. But Stephen is the éminence grise of the family law bar."

"Stephen is kind of a giant," adds Saei. "He walks in to the court and he is a force to be reckoned with. He has a an assertive tone of voice."

Both lawyers have squared off numerous times in the past. In 2010, Wasser represented Peter Getty, an heir to the Getty oil fortune, in his bitter divorce with his wife, Jacqueline. Kolodny represented Jacqueline, who alleged in court papers that one Christmas Eve, Peter broke her arm and locked her in their mansion. Peter denied the allegations.

However, the parties in the Berry-Martinez case seem to be trying to minimize the drama.

"I think Halle Berry sent a clear signal across the bow of everybody's boat that she wants to resolve it amicably," says Mindel. "The petitions filed indicate they understand they have to co-parent and you have two lawyers who are extremely well versed in how to keep their clients out of the press. As a result, I suspect that most or all of this will be resolved behind closed doors and we will get a very small glimpses of what happened in the divorce."

Around the Web

